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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Item 114 (b) of the preliminary list*
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS
QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE
APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE
EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 2 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative
of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the elections in Croatia issued by the European Union on 30 April 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

* A/52/50.



Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the European Union on the elections in Croatia
issued on 30 April 1997

The European Union has noted with satisfaction that local elections were held in Croatia on 13 April, and in particular that elections were held in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium on 13 and 14 April 1997, under the auspices of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES). It wishes to congratulate the Croatian authorities in this regard, as well as the Transitional Administrator, Mr. Klein, and the staff of UNTAES on having overcome organizational problems to see the elections through to a successful conclusion.

The high turnout at the polls shows that the local population in Eastern Slavonia has seized this chance of harmonious and mutually beneficial coexistence within Croatia. These local elections certainly form a firm basis for the peaceful reintegration of the region into Croatia. However, the European Union would point out that strict respect for human rights and for the rights of minorities throughout the country remains an essential prerequisite for the ultimate success of the reintegration process. The European Union will remain vigilant in this regard, as will the international community as a whole.

The European Union now calls on the parties to press ahead with the process of reintegration in a spirit of dialogue, openness, good faith and mutual understanding, in which endeavour they will be supported and supervised by the international community.



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Letter dated 2 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative
of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement of the European Union on the occasion of the granting of autonomous trade preferences to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, issued on 30 April 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement of the European Union on the occasion of the
granting of autonomous trade preferences to the Federal
Republic of Yugoslavia, issued on 30 April 1997

The Council has decided to extend autonomous trade preferences to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the year 1997.

With this measure, the European Union is responding to developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Although no formal dialogue between Government and opposition parties has yet started, representatives of both sides have participated in televised debates. The media scene is more diverse than before the November elections. The Serbian Government has removed a number of the most unwelcome elements from the second draft of its media law and has undertaken to produce a new federal law relating to State television.

At the same time, the European Union has taken note of the difficulties encountered by the economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Continued economic decline in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia affects in particular the population and could therefore also undermine stability across the region.

The decision to extend autonomous trade preferences has been taken against the background of the need to promote economic revival and to reinforce a trend towards democratization, and has been supported by the Zajedno opposition. This is the only basis on which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can hope to build internal stability and a productive relationship with the European Union. It is clear that there is room for improvement on both scores.

The European Union, therefore, expects the full and speedy implementation of the Gonzalez report. This includes acceptance of the facilitation by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe of dialogue between Government and opposition and the start of a dialogue, a further improvement of the draft media law as well as reform of the electoral law and independent operation of the judicial system. In the absence of progress by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia towards meeting these criteria, the decision on granting autonomous trade preferences will be reviewed.

In addition, the European Union expects from Belgrade substantial progress on the issue of Kosovo, a continued positive attitude towards Eastern Slavonia and continued implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. This includes the relations of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the Republika Srpska.

The Council today adopted conclusions on the application of conditionality for relations with the countries of the region. Further development of relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will be based on these conclusions.



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Letter dated 2 May 1997 from the Permanent Representative
of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on Belarus issued
by the European Union on 29 April 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its
annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (b) of
the preliminary list.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Belarus issued by the
European Union on 29 April 1997

At its meeting on 29 April 1997, the General Affairs Council took note of the letters of 10 April 1997 from President Lukashenko and Mr. Antonovich, responding to the report of the European Union fact-finding mission and the Council conclusions of 24 February 1997.

The European Union notes a clear discrepancy between the undertakings as expressed in the above-mentioned letters, and recent developments in Belarus. The European Union expresses its deep concern at the wave of arbitrary arrests of demonstrators and members of the opposition in recent weeks. Furthermore, the European Union rejects the various statements made by representatives of the Belarusian authorities since 10 April 1997 to the effect that the present political situation in Belarus should be accepted by the international community as a fait accompli.

The above-mentioned events raise doubts about the declared willingness of the Government of Belarus to work constructively with the European Union and relevant international organizations towards establishing a political system that respects the internationally accepted norms for human rights and political freedoms. Recalling its conclusions of 24 February 1997, the European Union reiterates its position that cooperation between States members and institutions of the European Union and Belarus cannot proceed in the absence of convincing efforts to establish such a system.

The European Union remains committed to a process whereby Belarus, in due course, can play a meaningful role on the European continent.

The European Union welcomes the formal undertaking by the Belarus authorities to initiate consultations with all the deputies of the elected thirteenth Supreme Soviet to establish a proper balance between the functions and duties of the members of the legislative, executive and judicial powers, as well as devise mechanisms that would strengthen respect for human rights and the position of the independent media.

The European Union appeals to the Belarusian authorities to implement this commitment by the end of May 1997.

The European Union, in close cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe is prepared to assist the Belarusian authorities in the process of democratization.

The European Union supports the OSCE efforts to establish independent mechanisms for monitoring the functioning of the existing legal framework for the protection of human rights and an independent role for the mass media and possible improvements to this legal framework.

/...

The European Union supports the establishment of an OSCE mission in Belarus, which it believes could play a vital role in promoting democratic reforms and respect for human rights.

The European Union has taken note of the appointment of Mr. Kosto by the Presidency as its Special Representative to the Republic of Belarus and has noted that Mr. Kosto has been given the tasks of:

(a) Assisting both the Belarusian authorities and all the deputies of the elected thirteenth Supreme Soviet in setting up a formal consultation mechanism to discuss proposals for amending the 1994 Constitution with a view to establishing a proper balance in the system of the separation of powers;

(b) Monitoring and facilitating the consultations in coordination with OSCE and the Council of Europe;

(c) Reporting to the General Affairs Council on the progress made in those consultations.

To these ends, Mr. Kosto will be assisted by a team of experts and will periodically visit Belarus. Mr. Kosto's mandate will be reviewed as required by political developments in Belarus and by the scope of future OSCE involvement.

Mr. Kosto and the team of experts would expect to have unrestricted access to any person or organization in Belarus they may wish to see.
